

12 November 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT : Guided Missiles and Post Mortems

REFERENCE : The Post Mortem on NIE 11-5-57, "Progress Report
by GMIC on Action Taken With Respect to Post-
Mortem on NIE 11-5-57"

1. The Progress Report by GMIC on action taken with respect to the Post Mortem on NIE 11-5-57 raises two questions. First, it seems to me that in view of the present emphasis on the missile problem the GMIC report reveals inadequate energy. Second, the Post Mortem procedure itself might conceivably be partly to blame in that the Post Mortem appears to represent an agreed interagency view and thus covers up sharp substantive issues that may actually be responsible for some of our failures in answering important questions about the Soviet guided missile program.

2. The Post Mortem requested appropriate IAC Agencies and Subcommittees to take action along three lines.

- "a. Continue intensive efforts to fill the gaps noted above, by exploiting to the fullest all existing intelligence collection methods.
- "b. Seek to develop and apply additional collection methods.
- "c. Study and recommend methods for improving the exploitation of available intelligence in the guided missile field, including methods for improving the community-wide coordination of effort."

GMIC's progress report, stripped of its bureaucratic language, says that GMIC has met point a. by drafting a statement of priority National Guided Missile Intelligence Objectives. It also says that it has established a subcommittee to give guidance to collectors and that it continues to guide collectors through the Interagency Defector Committee and through the Ad Hoc Committee on Exchanges, but since these actions seem to be routinely inherent in the intelligence process these can hardly be considered as outstanding initiative on the part of GMIC.

3. GMIC has responded to b. by disclaiming responsibility, although it claims that it has served as a mechanism for bringing ideas about new collection methods to the attention of groups charged with this responsibility. This again is an inherent part of the intelligence process and does not reflect noteworthy initiative. Passing on ideas is not enough in the current situation. A thorough systematic search for ideas might be more appropriate and more effective. The action taken with regard to paragraph c. so far has been nil, although half a page is spent in talking about studies undertaken which might at some future date result in some small improvement in the community-wide effort.

4. I do not know all of the politics involved in GMIC, but unless I can turn up some strong reason for not doing so, I would recommend that the IAC reject this report as indicative of insufficient action to remedy the defects revealed by the Post Mortem.

5. Before NIE 11-5-57 was prepared, I was able to brief Governor Stassen thoroughly on the evidence indicating that the Soviet Union might be building an Intercontinental Ballistics Missile range under a high priority program and that there was some belief in the community that, if this in fact was a missile range, it could be ready for operation during 1957. Shortly after the issuance of the NIE, I was able to inform Stassen that there was a strong minority view in the intelligence community which held that the Soviet Union might well test an ICBM during 1957. Naturally, on both occasions I pointed out to him that these were not the official views of the IAC. When I read the Post Mortem on NIE 11-5-57, however, I discovered that its analysis of deficiencies was pitched entirely in terms of "we" representing the entire community. There is no indication of alternative hypotheses which would reveal at a later date whether or not information was actually inadequate to form a basis for judgments in the NIE. I am inclined to think that the most important deficiency in the NIE was a deficiency of analysis, perhaps primarily in the Air Force, and that the evidence was insufficient to overcome politically inspired judgments on the part of the Air Force. Certainly the evidence was not as good as we might like, but it could conceivably have been interpreted more accurately. The existence of the accurate minority views cited above supports this conclusion.

6. If you have no objection, I would like to send copies of this memorandum to AD/WE and AD/SI to solicit their views and to discuss with them the possibility of developing a different format for Post Mortems which would permit the clear identification of substantive issues and their bearing on the adequacy of the information available.

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